Juries — 1925.

Race To Serve On Coroner's Juries

Washington, D. C.—Race men and women will be called for duty on coroner's juries for the first time according to announcement by Dr. J. R. Nevitt, white, coroner.

The announcement followed complaint by the Tribune, a local weekly, that coroner's juries were selected altogether from white persons.

RACE MAN SERVES ON GRAND JURY

For the first time in the history of Marion county, according to the statements of pioneer residents, a man of the race has been accepted for jury service. The man is John G. Clark, and is serving on the Marion county grand jury impaneled a few days ago in the Criminal court, over which Judge James A. Collins presides.

Mr. Clark is a blacksmith and resides at 2017 Churchman avenue. He also is the proprietor of a filling station at Keystone and churchman avenues.

Negroes and Whites On Mississippi Jury

Lexington, Miss., Oct. 21 (By A. N. P.)Practically for the first time in the history of the State of Mississippi and the South as well, have Negroes been placed on the juries to serve with white men in the dispensation of justice. This week in making up the grand and petit juries several Negroes were selected and accepted. In Issaquena County there are only one hundred and twenty white men subject to jury service.

NEGROES TO CHOOSE COLOR OF JURYMEN

Owensboro, Ky., December 19.—(AP) In the future when a negro is arraigned in the Owensboro police court it will be optional with him whether members of his own race or white citizens serve on the jury trying him. Judge R. E. Watkins today appointed three negro jury commissioners from the Snow Hill and Baptist Town sections of Owensboro. They will meet in the morning and select the names of 300 negro citizens for the jury wheel.

Judge Watkins stated tonight that in addition to the customary questions of "guilty or not guilty" he will add "white or black jury?"

KENTUCKY JUDGE TO EMPANEL NEGRO VENIREMEN

Owensboro, Ky., Dec. 20—Judge R. E. Watkins in opening the regular term of court here last week appointed three Negro jury commissioners to select the names of 300 Negro citizens to form a jury source and declared that hereafter he would propound the question "white or Negro jury" instead of "guilty or not guilty," when Negroes were arraigned for trial.

A COLORED JURY.

An Owensboro, Ky., Judge made a campaign promise to have Colored juries try Colored prisoners. The other day he tried out the experiment. We do not know how it worked but we are sure it would not work as a regular thing.

We believe Coloredcitizens ought to be called on for jury service, but not because they are Colored. Whatever the requirements for jury service should be applied to all citizens alike. If Colored men do not measure up to these requirements they should not be called. But if they do measure up, include them. If taken according to population there would perhaps be two Colored on every jury of twelve. But to make up a jury of 12 Colored men to try a Colored defendant is very unwise and in most cases where the matter before the Court concerned Negroes solely, we are sure the defendant would rather have an all White jury. On the other hand if he was charged with an offense against a White person, he doubtless would want an all Colored jury, harboring the hope that the kinship of color would help him. This we doubt, because on an all Colored jury he would be sure to find some brother who would be for the white folks. If the Judge at Owensboro and of Courts all over Kentucky want to be fair just call Colored citizens along with White citizens for jury service.

We doubt very much whether we wouldn't quake as much before an all Colored jury as we would before an all white one. We would feel far better facing a jury composed of White and Colored citizens.

BREAKING BLACK GRAND JURY RING.

The Informer hails with much delight the action of the Harris County grand jury commissioners in selecting the grand jurors for the next term, particularly in their selection of the colored representative of that investigative and inquisitorial body.

Heretofore the colored race has been represented on the grand jury of this county by a certain ring of colored men, four or five in number, and these few men have held this position like they had a patent or monopoly on it.

While the white personnel of the grand jury has changed with each succeeding term and rarely, if ever, the same men of the white race are continually and continuously placed on this body, it has been different as it relates to colored men, and only the "favored few" have enjoyed this position of trust, honor and civic consideration.

Really, it has been a reflection upon our race that, despite the large number of freeholders, taxpayers and property owners of our race in this city and county, less than one-half dozen colored men are considered sufficiently qualified to serve on the grand jury of Harris County from time to time.

Most of the race men who have served on the local grand jury are identified with that element of our race dubbed as the "me-too-boss, hat-in-hand, usher-serving, squatting bowing" species, and there was much method in the madness employed in passing this office around to this particular ring.

There is very little a colored man has done or can do on the grand jury, the position being tendered the race more out of respect and as a token of recognition for their citizenship; but the colored citizens of Houston and Harris County are unalterably opposed to such honor and recognition being dished out perennially to a few favored members of the "black kitchen cabinet"—many of whom, at their best, do not really represent their race and have done and are doing their utmost to isolate themselves from their racial group.

We have no particular fight to wage on these men, and what we are saying here is not actuated by any selfish or ulterior motives; but The Informer is firm in its opinion that the time has arrived in Harris County when this colored grand jury ring should be broken up, since all our racial sense and brains are not possessed by these "favored few."

Our white leaders and friends, who have been and are laboring under a false and erroneous impression regarding our race and its real, respected and substantial citizens, need to be told that there are plenty more men of our race in Houston and Harris County who are fully capable and competent to serve on the grand juries—many of them being far more capable and competent than some of the men who are members of the "black grand jury ring."

We appreciate such recognition, but we want such recognition to be awarded on merit, character and ability, and not because of long residence in the city and county, and acquaintanceship stretching over a number of years per se.

However, if the colored members of the Harris County grand jury are to merely serve in the lackey and servant role, as has been the case in most instances where these members of the "black kitchen cabinet" have served, then the grand jury commissioners will do well to keep such honors confined exclusively, wholly and solely to these "favored few," even if they are going contrary to legal procedure in the constant and repeated selection of members of the "black grand jury ring."

DEC 20 19

NEGROES TO CHOOSE COLOR OF JURYMEN

Owensboro, Ky., December 19.—(AP) In the future when a negro is arraigned in the Owensboro police court it will be optional with him whether members of his own race or white citizens serve on the jury trying him. Judge R. E. Watkins today appointed three negro jury commissioners from the Snow Hill and Baptist Town sections of Owensboro. They will meet in the morning and select the names of 300 negro citizens for the jury wheel.

Judge Watkins stated tonight that in addition to the customary questions of "guilty or not guilty" he will add "white or black jury?"